

ECONOMICS  
SEMINAR

AN ANALYSIS  
OF THE  
Life and Character  
OF



**JAMES MCLANE**  
**THE CENTENARIAN**

BY  
HIS SON



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AN ANALYSIS  
OF THE  
Life and Character  
OF  
JAMES McLANE  
The Centenarian  
BY HIS SON.



Franklin, Ohio  
The Franklin News  
1920







JAMES McLANE, AGED 103

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# JAMES McLANE, THE CENTENARIAN

## Advertisement

There appears to be a belief that the longevity of man is increasing. It is a comparatively rare occurrence for a man to reach the age of one hundred years, and when such an event happens, special notice is recorded of the same in the public prints. Rarely are these notices accompanied by an extended account of the life of the venerable person. To the student of anthropology it must be of interest to know what manner of man is that one who has reached so great an age.

It is an easy matter to point out the great occurrences which have taken place during the one hundred years that have been spanned. If a person has become a centenarian and passed his life in the immediate vicinity of his birth, it is remarkable for an individual to narrate the occurrences of which he has actual knowledge. In reality the constant changes in a village for one hundred years, and that retained in the recollection of one person, must be considered as momentous in the larger scenes in the history of the nation.

p 43258

In 1814 Middletown was a straggling village, about half-way between Hamilton and Dayton, located on the east bank of the great Miami river. In a sense it was a primitive settlement, although it contained frame houses and a grist mill. The residences of that village and the surrounding region were mostly log cabins. The aborigines still visited the village and were paid for shooting at marks. Squirrels, in vast numbers, would swim across the river and boys would wade out into the stream to knock them over with a club. Wild geese and wild pigeons would fly over the country in vast swarms continuing for days in their migratory flight. Great changes came over the village. There was the introduction of the Miami canal, then the railroad which put a stop to the stage coach. The turnpike, or gravelled road was introduced. Factories of various descriptions were constructed, and the growth kept pace with improvements. The telegraph and telephone took their respective places in due time. All this, and more, was witnessed by James McLane. During his entire life he changed residences but four times, and never lived over eight miles from the place of his nativity.

When James McLane had reached the age of ninety-five the newspapers began to take notice of him. Having attained the age of one hundred, then the notices became quite extended in their accounts of his life. Many papers gave his portrait, and one especially gave a very extended notice with his por-

trait and a cut of his home. After his death notices took a very wide range.

Of these only the following are given:

MIDDLETOWN, OHIO, NEWS-SIGNAL,  
SEPTEMBER, 25, 1919.

“To live to nearly pass the fifth anniversary, over the century mark is indeed a privilege that few in these modern days enjoy.

But to live to see the wilderness transform in stages from the woodman's ax to the airplane from the tallow dip to radium, and greater than all the infant republic, America, just starting from the womb of the immortal Declaration with its thirteen states a merge fringe along the Atlantic to its position today in the vanguard of the world's countries, all the world acknowledging its debt in teaching those grand precepts of that sacred document penned nearly a century and a half ago stood for, is indeed a heritage that few, can ever hope for or have experienced. Such was the experience of James McLane, centenarian, who passed peacefully away yesterday at his home near Franklin.

James McLane was a man of whom we all might take example. Of that hardy Scottish blood that fought Culloden's battle, that produced a Wallace, a Burns and a Bruce.

He came, he saw and he conquered. He did not seek adulation, eulogy or emulation. He was a worker and today the world mourns his loss.

The older generation will mourn the passing of

this centenarian because he was one of the solid men of those days when men of his kind were the bulwark of the young republic. They were the men who took the raw west and moulded it into what it is today, the home of teeming millions of the best that the world can or has produced.

The younger element will revere the deceased because of his sterling habits, and his giving to the world able sons, one high in literary research and scientific writing, an authority on many subjects, and whose works are placed in the leading colleges of the world. Also, a grandson prominent in newspaper circles of the west.

Future generations will refer to James McLane as one of the real men of the nineteenth and twentieth century, who helped in a big way to make the world a fitting place for man to inhabit—a real democracy.”

— — — —  
“WAR FINANCE CORPORATION”

Washington, September 27, 1919.

Your father made a wonderful impression on me, and I can say in all sincerity that he was one of the most remarkable men I have ever met.

Sincerely yours,  
A. W. McLean.”

— — — —  
FROM THE HEREDITARY CHIEF OF CLAN MacLEAN:

15 Hyde Park Terrace,  
London, 10th November, 1919.

You will have received a letter from the Clan As-



sociation expressing our deep sympathy for you and yours on the death of your father. He was indeed a wonderful man, and a clansman much to be respected. What an example he set us to do one's duty fearlessly and steadily.

Your faithful chief,  
Fitzroy D. Maclean.

**CLAN MACLEAN ASSOCIATION**

Glasgow, 5th November, 1919.

Dr. J. P. MacLean:

My Dear Clansman—

At the annual gathering of the clan held in the Grand hotel, Glasgow, on Friday 24th October 1919, the chief of the clan made reference to the lamentable death of your father at the ripe age of 105 years, and he desires me to express to you the deepest sympathy of the whole of the clan in your bereavement. The chief and clansmen are particularly interested and sympathetic to hear of the death, in any distant part, of a respected clansman at an age which few of us are now permitted to see.

With kind regards, and adding my own unit of sympathy, I am,

Yours sincerely,  
N. S. MacLean, Secretary.

**Birth and Ancestry**

James McLane was born in Middletown, Ohio, October 13, 1814, being a son of William and Mar-

garet McClean. William was a mill-wright by trade. He came to Butler county, Ohio, in 1807. He was born on Laurel Hill, Virginia, and from there, with his father, moved ten miles west of Uniontown, Pennsylvania. In Uniontown he courted Margaret Clark, but she married John Curry, who died and left the wife with one son. With her son she moved to Rising Sun, Indiana. William, now forty years of age, again sought her out, and married her in 1812. She died September 25, 1835. She belonged to a long-lived family. A sister's son was Hon. J. B. McGrew, of Kingston, West Virginia, who reached the age of 95. William was a little above medium height, clear grey eyes, rather silent but a good conversationalist. He built the first dam across the Miami, at Middletown, and established there the first merchant mill. He amassed a small fortune, but lost it all through going security for a brother-in-law. He moved to Franklin and engaged in mercantile business. He attended the Presbyterian church, but declined becoming a member on the ground that he repudiated the doctrine of predestination. He was strictly honest and benevolent. It was his custom in his mill to wait on customers in rotation. Once, being in the cellar, repairing some machinery, a customer emptied his grist in the hopper, thus taking the place of a woman, who was in advance. When William came out of the cellar he found the woman crying, lamenting she had come a long distance, and would be late in the night reach-



ing home. William talked very plain to the man, who now became obstreperous. William seized and punished him, and compelled him to take his grist out of the hopper. Placing the woman's grist in the hopper, he then invited her and her child to his home, gave them dinner, and seeing she was poor charged nothing for grinding the corn. In constructing the mill dam William caught a cold which settled on his lungs, caused him to cough for forty years, and finally wore him out. It was called "old fashioned consumption." His last years were spent in the home of his son James, and there died April 25, 1855, in his 83rd year.

His father was John McLean born in Scotland about the year 1738. He belonged to a hardy, rugged race. He was related to Flora MacDonald, the most famous of all Scotland's heroines. When her husband Allan was a prisoner, taken at the battle of Widow Moore's Creek bridge, during the American Revolution, on his way to Philadelphia, he stopped and was entertained at John's home. John married in Ireland, and in 1765 settled on a farm at the forks of Goose creek in Loudon county, Virginia. He moved from there to a location ten miles west of Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and in 1807, settled on a farm near Monroe, Butler county, where he died, from the effects of a fall, January 4, 1818, in his 80th year. He was known as a man of great kindness of heart and generous impulses, and ever swayed by the principles of justice. He was a member

of Dick's Creek Presbyterian church, located about four miles north of Monroe. Although his relatives fought against the Americans, in the Revolution, yet he was true to the country of his adoption and supported the cause of Washington.

## **Childhood and Youth**

The childhood of James McLane was spent in Middletown. Almost at the verge of infancy he met with a misfortune that followed through life, and again became very painful during his last few years. His half-brother let him fall, resulting in the breaking of the instep of his left foot. In consequence of this he never walked until four years of age. With this misfortune he cried very much. The state of intelligence of the medical profession at that time was such that the cause of the crying was not known. Through life the foot was small, and toes partially bent under. This caused him to have a marked limp, which grew more pronounced as he grew older. At the age of forty he commenced to use a cane, and during the last three years of his life went about on crutches. In his youth the crippled foot does not appear to have caused him much inconvenience, for he was active in all the games and pranks of those of his age. His boyhood, then, presents nothing out of the common. It was practically the same as that of all boys who are enterprising and try to push forward. He was particularly noted as one "who would fight at the drop of a hat," if the occasion required.

He had high ideas of his rights and would brook no infringement. If there was anything of special interest transpiring he managed to be present. He saw the first shovel full of earth removed in digging the Miami canal. The first wheel-barrow loads were removed by Governor Morrow of Ohio, Governor Clinton of New York, and Governor Graham of Pennsylvania. An immense crowd was present. Many men and women had walked a distance of ten miles. The speakers addressed the crowds from open wagons. The water was first let into the canal during the winter of 1827, and James was the first to plunge into it and swim across. The Lady Jackson was the first boat, and then used for pleasure. James was its first driver, and also drove the first boat—The General Oliver—on its first trip to Cincinnati, for which he was to receive fifty cents. The captain fed him on bread and water, and refused to pay him for his services. He went to the magistrate to enter suit. That dignitary of the law laughed at and made sport of him. At this time he was aged fourteen. Early in childhood the principle of equity dawned upon him in a crude way. Dressed in white he went to visit his grandfather and Uncle Stephen, who lived together near Monroe. Noticing that the tar bucket of his father had less tar in it than that of his Uncle Stephen, he attempted to equalize the tar, with the result that a fair portion was added to his clothing.

When he reached the age of fourteen his father

removed to Franklin and opened a store of general merchandise. James became assistant. The time soon came to choose for himself, and then he was apprenticed to a saddle and harness maker. For his services, during this period, he received only his board and washing. He soon made himself popular with the members of the home, by never leaving in the morning without first supplying all the wood and water needed during the day and performing all chores cheerfully.

### Marriage and Occupation

When James had passed through the period of apprenticeship, he established himself in business as a saddle and harness maker. On January 20, 1836, he married Rachel, daughter of Elder Isaac and Elizabeth Dearth, and immediately commenced housekeeping,—borrowing a table and chairs. He was able to purchase these, after six months, from the saving of his earnings. By hard work and saving he gradually added to his business and household effects.

Similar to his father, James was disposed (and althrough life) to place too much confidence in others. Misfortune followed him, and financially, twice he lost all, but did not despair. In all things through life he was an optimist and pessimism never entered into his calculations. At first the Bible was his bank. All paper money was placed there for preservation. One night a stranger called at the

home to pay a bill. He noticed James place the money in the Bible. That night the Bible and money disappeared. The Bible was afterwards found on the river's bank. All his money was gone. He plodded on, and kept gaining. In the town was a deacon, who was long the head man in the church. He had been a wagon maker, then to his accomplishments added that of doctor, tanner and general store. He came to James with this proposition: "I am going down the Ohio river and it will be a splendid opportunity for you to dispose of saddles. I will take them along and sell them for you. You may have all the leather from my tanyard you want, and you can pay me after the saddles are sold," The snare was an inviting one. All his energies were thrown into the saddles, and the faithful wife stitched saddles until 2 o'clock in the morning, besides her other duties. Finally the saddles were ready for shipment, and a heavy debt for that time incurred. Then the deacon came and said he could not take the trip, but his brother Newt was going and he would attend to the sale. Still James did not see the trap, but dropped into it. That was the last of the saddles; but the deacon held him for the debt. There was no redress whatever under the law. "It was simply a breach of trust," and Newt did not have property. Hard work, saving and energy were put forth. Above all things the faithful wife was not extravagant, nor did she have a taste for "finery." Yet, during the struggle to pay this debt, "finery" of all



kinds were charged. Finally the last penny was paid, and then the deacon got a scorching richly deserved. All transactions with the deacon had reached an end.

As the struggle continued James commenced to rent or hire out a horse and carriage he had secured. This was the beginning of the livery business in Franklin. Other horses and carriages were secured, for this branch was more profitable than saddle making. The stable soon became quite noted. Many travellers were taken long distances by the proprietor. It was the days of mud roads and few bridges. There was exposure. One night, between Monroe and Blue Ball, James almost froze to death. Economy and industry were still practiced and soon James had enough money to purchase a small farm for cash. This farm is located on the tract purchased by my mother's grandfather, from Symmes, and afterwards was forced to repurchase from the government.

Deeming that a small town was not a proper place to bring up boys, James sold the small farm and purchased a larger one, three miles southeast of Franklin, and moved upon it in March 1852, and there continued until his death.

Previously to moving on the farm there were born five sons and three daughters, one son died in infancy and another reached the age of seventy-four, leaving six living at the time of the death of James. The youngest is in her seventieth year and the eldest in

• 5  
her eighty-third. The combined ages of the father and the six living issue amounted to five hundred and fifty-six years.

Before removing to the farm it was prophesied that James would not content himself there. The first six months he was constantly on the farm, and did not enter the village, and never after visited it, unless on business, or the attendance of public meetings and the lodge of Oddfellows. He seldom made visits even among his kindred, but always welcomed visitors to his home.

Before purchasing the farm he had added broom corn raising, and broom making to his other labors. He found this was more remunerative than the other lines of business he had assumed. He now commenced on a larger scale, not only raising forty-five acres annually, but purchasing the brush also when necessary in order to keep his men employed. There were six broom makers the year round. In harvesting the crop fifteen men and boys were employed. This entailed additional labor on my mother. It was found necessary to build two tenant houses on the farm, which, with garden plot and the use of teams, were given without charge.

In all the labors of the farm James was with his men and assisted in the work. In those days the laborers received sixty-five and one-half cents per day. Yearly hands received eleven dollars per month, with board and washing. Broom makers

were paid by the dozen, the wage ranging from thirty to forty cents per dozen. The average day's work was four dozen, though one hand made ninety-six, without the sewing. A day's work was from sun up to sun down.

In those days the men took an interest in their labor, and worked to the best advantage of the employer. My father would go to Cincinnati with a load of brooms, and nearly always gone two nights; never left any one in charge of the men. The work went on smoothly and well.

The raising of broom corn was continued for many years after his sons had left the home. He was successful in raising cattle, hogs and sheep. The wool of the sheep was never marketed, but taken to a factory in Springboro, where it was woven into cloth, blankets or yarn for the benefit of the family.

## Mental Qualities

Whatever may be a man's financial success—indeed any success—it is as nothing in comparison to his mentality. Although mental make up is preeminent in a successful life. The nerve force, in grasp of the mind bid highest in man. To it we ascribe religion, morals, thought and all other qualities that belong to individuality. Of a truth it may be said that James McLane had an individuality peculiar to himself. To analyze and grasp it may thus be set forth:



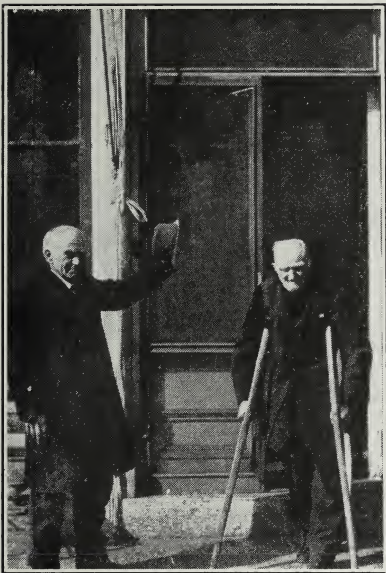
## Religion

It may be said with great truth that man worships a God after his own heart. A vindictive man establishes a vindictive God. A benevolent man worships a benevolent God. From the Great Heart of Jesus of Nazareth there comes forth a God who is Our Father. This truth of man's God does not imply that every man's God, in his own heart, is simplified in the creed of his church. James was nurtured in the Presbyterian church, and yet his father asserted his right to think for himself.

Before James was fourteen he heard his teacher explaining the relation of God to immortality. The quick mind of the child, inwardly explained, "Then all mankind must ultimately become holy and happy." From that time forward he was a Universalist, and afterward was a regular attendant and supporter of the Universalist church in Springboro, until infirmities of age overtook him. Its denominational paper, "The Star in the West," and its successor, he subscribed regularly for during a period of sixty years. While firm in his faith, he never tried to force his views upon another, nor did he ever try to upset any one or cast reflections on their views. He never engaged in religious controversy unless assaulted. I remember an uncle who was very dogmatic in all his views try his hand at controversy. He soon had awakened a sleeping lion, and was glad to desist. However he was very fond of public discussion, and

never failed to attend all that were reasonably within his reach. Whatever he gave for the support of churches was never mentioned in his family. In short, it was very seldom for him to mention benefactions. I well remember a statement I heard Rev. Dr. James Maple, of the Christian Connexion (called New Light), make. For over twenty years he had charge of the church in Franklin. His salary was \$300, and that was not always collected. He stated that many a time he was at a loss for money, and then James would slip a five dollar bill in his hand, with the injunction that it was not to be applied on salary. During his latter days Rev. Dr. Clarence Weakley, a Methodist divine, was a frequent caller at our home. The subject of religion was often broached, but no disputations. Once I heard father say to him: "The same God who attended me at my birth, will also be with me when I cross to the great beyond." His lips were always free from profanity, or moderate words used in place thereof.

It is a singular fact that in Franklin the three early Universalists, all cotemporary, were workers in leather,—one a saddler, one a shoemaker and the other a tanner. The shoemaker retired to a farm east of Middletown, and the tanner moved to Cincinnati, became a wholesaler in leather, and died wealthy. All started in life without capital.



JAMES McLANE  
Last Voting, Nov. 5, 1918

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## Right and Wrong

My father's sense of right and wrong was very keen. It was always his endeavor to view both sides of the same question, and then estimate the equal. The main point was to discover the right. If he found that, there, so far as he was concerned, there was no issue. When angles were presented, he attempted to sift the whole. The rule of right he attempted to apply to all the conditions of life, which early led him to espouse the cause of equal division of property in the family; universal suffrage; freedom of the negro; equal rights before the law, etc. In all this, to a great extent, he was governed by his finer feelings; for he was a man of deep and sensitive feeling, and was easily brought to tears, especially in seasons of sorrow and bereavement. He was named James Clark, after his maternal grandfather. As he approached the years of maturity he learned that his mother had been cruelly treated by her father. Her mother had died when she was only a child, and all the household duties, the care of the younger children, and even the washing of all the clothing were thrust upon her. Once he whipped her for blowing the horn too soon for dinner; and again for accidentally letting one of the children fall. Father loved and venerated his mother; and so indignant did he become that he erased the word "Clark" from his name. Only on very rare occasions did he refer to it. He changed the spelling of his

surname to "McLane," because, as he conceived, it was simpler and better represented the pronunciation. The records of the probate court of Butler county show that William spelled the surname "McClean," and his father, John, "McLean." A brother of James adopted "McLain."

### **Moral Reforms**

In the highest sense all reforms are daughters of religion, and this is specially true of temperance. James joined the Washingtonian Movement, and ever remained true to the cause. During his whole life he never partook of any intoxicants unless prescribed by a physician, and only then under protest. He did not allow intoxicants kept in the house. After passing the age of eighty-five, his condition was such that it was deemed advisable to give him a tablespoonful of wine in hot water, sweetened with sugar, for breakfast. He greatly demurred, claiming he had always been a temperance man, and he should so die. Reasoning with him it was only as a medicine he finally consented, but soon abandoned it, and then whiskey was tried. Toward the last this was also given up. Whether this treatment resulted in any benefit or not it is impossible to determine. It is more than probable that in some instances it did act as a stimulant, though the dose never exceeded a tablespoonful.

In early manhood he used tobacco, but on the advice of the family physician he instantly desisted.



On all theories for social improvement he took a deep interest, but never allowed himself to be swerved by specious pleas. In his nature there was a constant lookout for improvement, and when he moved it was with rapidity. Generally speaking he was rather conservative.

## Independence

Whatever view he held, or action he might take, the question of popularity, or what the world might say, did not interest him. In no instance did he court popularity, or seek to gain applause. The great question that entered the mind was, is it right? Among some of the reforms he instituted in his own household, were in abolishing the wakes for the dead, then very popular; abolishing the use of the dinner horn, and in its place setting up the dinner bell, although it was derisively called "MacLean's hotel bell." In less than a year the same was used by nearly all the neighbors. In 1852 all the farmers supplied whiskey in the harvest field. James immediately announced that none should be allowed in his fields. He was informed, in that case no one would harvest for him. He replied: "Then with the aid of my boys, I will do my own harvesting." Within three years all the neighboring farmers had abolished the use of intoxicants in the field, and generally had banished the same from their homes. It required only some one to take a decided stand.

## Political

In some families both politics and religion become hereditary. I never knew the politics of John McLean, save that he was faithful to the cause of his adopted country. It is probable he was a Federalist, which party was killed, owing to its opposition to the war of 1812. William McClean is positively known to have been a Whig; but that party held its first national convention in 1831. What he was anterior to that date, I have no method of determining. On the death of the Whig party and the organization of the Republican, William affiliated with it. He never held, nor aspired to any office.

Politically James followed in the footsteps of his father, and was active in the support of both parties, though never aspiring to or holding office in either. Until extreme old age he continued to cast his vote. His last vote, however, was cast in November 1918. With all his political conferees he was a loyal and consistent supporter, especially of President Lincoln in all his measures during the Civil War. It is not to be inferred that he blindly followed his party. He did not hesitate to repudiate any candidate he thought unworthy of the office.

## Secret Societies

The fact that James was a member of the Independent Order of Oddfellows is evidence that he never opposed fraternity organizations. In this



organization, and in the same lodge, he held continuous membership for sixty-seven years. During his residence in Franklin he was a regular attendant at its meetings. After removing to the farm he contented himself by responding to all the calls made upon him. His last special recognition of the Order was to appear, in the parade on its centennial celebration in June 1918. He enjoyed all the visits made by members of the Order, and especially the annual celebration of his birthday which were regular during closing years. He especially enjoyed the visits of the Grandmasters of Ohio and Kentucky.

### Education

The public schools met his cordial support, and made it obligatory on all his children to be in regular attendance. Those who desired the higher education were encouraged and freely aided. His school education was only that which his native village afforded, in the way of subscription schools. However he became proficient in grammar, mathematics, geography and history. His evenings and spare time were devoted to reading, especially so after removing to the farm. In books he took a wide range, reading anything that would give information, and sometimes a novel would appeal to him. He was free to purchase books having an uplift. After he had passed his ninetieth year he read Garcilassa de la Vega's "Commentaries of Peru," edition of 1688. His last reading was done by the aid of a magnify-

ing glass. The last six years of his life he was deprived of the pleasure of reading, through defective eye-sight, although he could always see to move about up to within a few days of his departure. What he read he retained. His memory was tenacious and accurate, and almost to the last minute he retained the things of the past and the present. He seldom discussed the things he read, and never attempted to exhibit his knowledge. He never forgot a book he had read, and could tell the general drift of its contents. Besides his church paper he long continued to take a Cincinnati weekly paper, and for forty years a county paper was procured for the home. The daily, toward the last, was a welcome visitor. None of the papers were ever filed for future reference.

Being deprived of the pleasure of reading, sitting in his easy chair, he would sing the songs of his childhood, snatches of which we would be able to gather. He would repeat conversations he had previously engaged in, which occurred beyond our advent. Sometimes he would give a slight laugh. These were the only times I ever heard him laugh, although smiling was common. The want of laughter appears to be characteristic of this family.

### **Ingenuity**

Any part of machinery he was able to adjust, or new machinery he could put together. Often he made improvements on the same. In 1867 he in-

vented the farm hollow roller. It was composed of two cylinders and each cylinder divided into two parts. Every part contained an iron ball weighing seventy-five pounds. The purchase being above the balls, kept the weight next the earth, thus reducing the draught on the horses to a minimum. The principle was discovered during the summer of that year. Sorely afflicted with pains in the back, he spent much time lying on the floor on his back, for only in that way could he find relief. One day he noticed a grandson rolling a cylindrical bottle with a marble in it. His quick eye detected that the marble always rested next to the floor. At once he applied this to a farm roller, made out the plan and measurements, and engaged a carpenter to construct the same. No error occurred in his specifications. He refused to apply for a patent in his belief that all farmers should be free to use it. It was so extensively borrowed by his neighbors, that he was forced to renew the woodwork of the cylinders.

Soon after taking charge of his farm, he made out specifications for a farm wagon, and gave same to a wagon-maker, with orders for it. The mechanic literally followed the specifications, but the wagon did not meet his expectations, and it was never repaired, and for a period of forty years some of its parts were still on the farm. The same identical structure is now in common use among the farmers of south-western Ohio.

## Superstitions

A belief in the supernatural is ground into the very nature of the Scottish Highlander. It is traced among the families of that nation, though long removed from the original home. While James McLane might be said to be free, yet indications were sometimes manifested. A belief in the supernatural was tabooed, and ghost stories not tolerated in the family. The stream of superstitions indicated would not be so looked upon by the average man. The most conspicuous was his belief in the efficiency of medicine, although that belongs to nearly all classes and nations. However, I do not recall an instance where he sent for a physician for himself, and when advised to consult one, usually protested. He was always the first to discover that the remedy used did not apply to the case. On the other hand he was always prompt in securing medical treatment, when any member of the family apparently required it. He believed, in his old days, that the fruit of a buckeye tree, if carried about the person, was a positive remedy in rheumatism, and collected the same every year to distribute the same freely among those afflicted. He believed in planting potatoes in the old of the moon; that shingles should be nailed to roof, and corner chunks under fence rail corners, should be placed in the new or full of the moon; hogs trimmed in certain signs of the zodiac, but doubtful about commencing a new work on Friday. Fortu-

nately in all this his wisdom got the better of the teaching, and when the time came for action he was not guided by the almanac, nor did he consult the records of the absurd.

## Disposition

On three or four times I have seen my father, momentarily give way to indignation; yet, I never saw him display anger. I have frequently seen him take a decided stand which forbade any encroachment. Naturally he had a fiery temper, which in his earlier years, was easily wrought upon. He early learned the folly of anger, and at once sought to have complete control over himself. He ultimately became one of the most forbearing and patient of men, which new revelation continued to grow upon him. A lady, after years of acquaintance with him, once said to him: "How is it that you are always so patient?" He replied: "I have as quick a temper as any person, but I have learned to control it." That he was quick to resent a wrong, I give in following instances:

In 1852, when the writer was four years of age, I went into the livery-stable, recently turned over to the new proprietor, M—. The proprietor, seized me, lifted me up by the feet, took me to the water barrel, threatening to drown me. I was terribly frightened, and screamed, only as a child can. Father heard that cry, and then rushed with all possible speed. By the time he reached the door, M— had released



his hold, and was cutting me around the legs, with a whip, and all the time I was screaming with all the fright possible. Father immediately seized the situation; rushed upon M—; struck him a powerful blow in the face, which landed the miscreant flat on his back. That stroke cost father \$70. M— had not paid the full amount on the sale, and being angered by his discomfiture, caused a lawsuit on the debt.

When father was eighty-five a man tried to swindle him out of the price agreed upon for a wagon. Some words ensued, and in the controversy father told him the opinion in which he was held, and then rushed for him to drag him off the horse. The man paid his debt. This I witnessed.

During the Civil War, father spoke to a man concerning his actions towards a son. The man replied, "Your son lies." Instantly the man was picking himself up from the ground where he was prostrated.

I have heard from different parties, who witnessed the scene which occurred about the year 1868. Two of his daughters had run up against him a dry goods bill amounting to several hundred dollars, without his knowledge or consent. The witnesses said it was "a veritable storm."

## Home Life

The real life of a man is exhibited in the home. Whatever may be his judgment or sensibilities that life brings this forth. In his home, on the farm,

father was ever contented and at his best. The government of the family largely rested upon my mother. We soon learned that when he spoke obedience was necessary. There was no appeal from one to the other. The government was always mild, and the best interests of all were considered. Arbitrary law was absent. The wishes or desires of every member were listened to. Probably too much latitude was often conceded. Punishment was seldom resorted to. The switch, on very rare occasions was used. I only recall four instances, and then the stroke was always up. His fondness for children was great; and usually a grandchild was in the family. He would take an infant, rest it partly on his chest, and then read by the hour.

Within the house my mother was supreme. There was no interference or suggestions relative to its management. She was a most excellent cook, and saw to it that all cooking was thoroughly done. Her housekeeping was cleanly and in order, with a place for everything. She was a generous provider, placing on the table all that was beneficial, and that of the very best quality. The three meals per day varied but little, save on Sunday, when the meal for dinner was extra; and that for supper consisted of bread and milk; but in the winter corn-mush was substituted for the wheat bread. The favorite dishes of father were pie and stewed green peas. Pie was served at every meal, and his favorite was apple and peach, and when just out of the oven he

would add cream and sugar. He never drank more than a cup of coffee or tea at a meal. Coffee was served in the morning and after 1854, milk and tea for dinner and supper. At dinner he drank his glass of buttermilk. He never eat between meals, except fruit. I never saw him drink water at any time. He never suggested what should be prepared for the table, nor did he take exceptions to what was placed before him. Mother superintended the marketing, turning the butter and eggs into groceries. Father looked after the meat, flour and potatoes. He eat with great rapidity, and immediately left the table when replenished. In the consumption of food he was quite moderate. He never referred to the meal, nor stated what had been set before him.

When evening set in mother would take up her knitting or mending of clothes, and father would read aloud, either from a newspaper or a book. When pushed, mother would take the evening for twisting yarn, preparatory for knitting. Any member of the family could retire to another room. Eight o'clock p. m. was retiring hour, with breakfast generally before daylight.

### **Treatment of Animals**

Father was never known to abuse or mistreat an animal of any description. If it was necessary to kill a horse, he would give the order, but never witnessed the action. The animals were regularly and amply fed, while he never whipped a horse, he



did not hesitate "to touch them up," with a switch if he possessed the same; but generally slap with the lines. Occasionally he hauled the produce to market, and sometimes went with brooms to Cincinnati and Dayton. During life he owned 300 different horses, and in his younger days was considered a good horse-trader, as he was a good judge of that animal.

### Personal Features

Father was not a man to attract attention, save by his limp when walking. His looks, his clothing, his mannerism and his voice were not specially noticeable. He never took a position in a crowd, or said a word that would cause him to be noticed. He never sought notice or praise, nor did he ever intentionally provoke blame. There was not a particle of show or display in his composition. His clothing was always plain, and for every day use made of cloth from which his sheep had produced the wool. He never wore underclothing or an overcoat until after he had passed his seventieth year, although he had often been exposed to the inclemency of the weather and fording smaller streams.

His eyes were grey and deep set. In his prime he stood five feet nine inches, with a chest measurement of forty-two inches. His hair was dark brown. He was compactly built. Owing to the long use of the awl, in sewing harness and stitching saddles, his knuckles were enlarged, and were rather noticeable

in old age. At the time of his decease his chest measured thirty-five and one half inches, and head measurement, just above the ears, twenty-two inches.

### **Peculiarities**

The peculiarities were not of a pronounced nature. In early life he was much given to swimming, but during the last sixty years he probably never entered the water. His rule was to take a towel bath once a week, and during the spring and autumn months was fond of bathing his feet in very warm water in which was ground mustard seed.

While his sense of humor was very keen, yet he never repeated an amusing story, nor passed a practical joke. Sometimes he would tease children after a harmless manner. He never owned a tooth brush, nor used one, and retained the greater number of teeth up to his ninetieth year; had seven teeth five years before his death, and four at the last. At the age of forty he suffered greatly from the toothache, and night after night walked the floor on account of the violent pain. At that time he noticed a statement in a newspaper, that if a person when washing his face, would take his thumbs, while yet wet, and give the bone just back of the ears a good rubbing, he would never have the toothache. He put this immediately into practice, and never after suffered from the complaint. After awhile the action became a habit which ever continued.

It was almost an inviolable rule never to borrow,

but to own all that was needed. On the other hand he never refused to loan, on account of which he was much imposed upon. One neighbor, of much wealth, was an incessant borrower, but never returned the loaned implement; and if he broke the said tool, he never offered to replace it. No fault was found, or reference made to it.

While he was fearless, yet he had a fear of being burned out, owing to so many cases that had come under his individual notice, resulting from revenge. It was largely on this ground that he did not resent hunting on his property, though his fences were thrown down, his stock shot, and his poultry stolen. He never hunted game himself, nor did he keep firearms about the house. Nor were any of his doors ever locked, until after the house was twice robbed by night; and this appears to have been done by an employe whom he had specially favored. As his father had been financially ruined by going security, he always refused to become a bondsman. Nor did he ever ask it of another.

He never stopped to consider whether his views, dress or manner would be favorably received. Never did he court popularity. If a new idea dawned upon him, its acceptance was never governed by the might be opinions of others.

While he avoided litigation, yet he did not fear it. I recall only one case when he was sued at the law. He had purchased many **cords** of wood for speculation. After paying the whole amount, the man

claimed that the last credit received was lacking to the amount of \$10, and prosecuted for that amount. Father employed no attorney, but on the trial produced five witnesses, who were present in the grocery at the time the final settlement was made, and that they saw the bills laid out one by one on the man's knee, and mentally counted the same. The man afterwards said: "I spent \$30 to get \$10 and then didn't get it." When he entered suit, which couldn't have been over five or six times, it was because it was aggravated.

### **Sickness and Suffering**

The only tradition in the family, of sickness, I recall, is that of pneumonia, when he was a boy. He was doctored by his half-brother, John Curry. As I remember the treatment was by bleeding. Arriving at the age of forty he began to have severe pains in his back, more or less alternated by excruciating pains in his right side. During one of these paroxysm he would lean up against the garden fence, while great drops of sweat would pour out on his face, and the muscles tightly drawn; though there was no word of complaint, and seldom a groan. It is a little singular that a granddaughter and the writer have been afflicted with the same kind of pain in the side. Various medicine men were consulted, but none gave him any relief. It was at this time that the family, and shared by himself, thought his days were numbered. Singular, as it may seem,

that idea ever continued in the family. My mother strongly believed it. Many summers were days of distress. Toward winter the pains grew less in intensity. Then vomiting set in and medical assistance did not benefit. Finally, of his own volition, he commenced to eat the tender sprouts of sassafras, and soon the vomiting ceased. He always attributed the relief to the free use of this tree, although every spring the root was made into tea and served twice a day at two of the meals.

Twenty years before father's death, during the hot days of summer, he would be seized with great shortness of breath. Sometimes it became necessary to fan him.

In 1848 he suffered from the Asiatic cholera, and his case was the worst that recovered in Franklin. A stranger entered the village, and that night developed all the symptoms of Asiatic cholera. The people were alarmed, and no one would visit him. Father realized the situation and at once went to see him and administered unto him. In a few days father was prostrated. For two weeks, my mother alone, by night and by day, took care of him and their infant son, who also had contracted the disease. Finally the disease fastened itself upon her.

Rheumatism had a severe hold on him in his later years, insomuch so that he could hardly help himself with his hand. When at its worst; and while sitting on the west porch, a flash of lightning struck a spruce tree, some twenty feet away. The pain im-



mediately ceased and never returned.

During the summer of his seventy-first year he requested a hired man to help him on a horse. Thinking to do something smart, the man threw him above the horse in order that he might heavily fall on the creature's back. This fall produced hernia. The wound gradually enlarged until it was beyond control. During the rest of his life it was not only of great inconvenience, but from it he frequently suffered greatly. The last severe complaint was a cough which lasted several years, without relief. The greatest difficulty was in raising the phlegm. In the paroxysm that followed it appeared that he would choke to death. During the severest part of the winter of 1917-18, the cough left him.

While there were other complaints, yet the above were the major afflictions. There were seasons when he was wholly free, but in later years disease tread its weight, one after the other, in somewhat rapid succession. All of these afflictions mother closely studied, and took full charge without hesitation, and usually gave her own prescriptions. It was her custom every autumn to go to the fields for catnip, pennyroyal and mint, which did service during the winter. But her care and faithful watchfulness ceased when she departed this life May 29, 1899.



## Longevity

Whatever may have been his life, there must have been some special cause, or a combination of circumstances that prolonged it to so great a length. The attributable causes may possibly have embraced the following:

First. Doubtless ancestry had something to do with it and was the foundation. But his own father died of consumption after forty years' trial. What effect this had on shortness of breath, in later years, we cannot determine. Of the numerous descendants of William, only two deaths from consumption are known,—one a great grandson and the other a great granddaughter(both of the family of James,) due in both cases, to vaccination. Neither had ever seen their great grandfather, William. When William became an inmate of James' family, it contained seven children, all under age. He coughed much of the time, and expectorated greatly, and during the day and evening occupied the sitting room, with the family.

Second. Mode, or manner of life may have been a potent factor. On the farm he lived largely out of doors and spent much of his time engaged with the men at work in the field, in the woodland, or in the broom shop, as well as peddling brooms.

Third. The buildings were sufficiently high above the ground level, or an elevated position, having complete natural drainage.

Fourth. Within the dooryard are two sulphur wells having a depth of twenty feet, walled up with stone, and kept clean. Of this water he drank but very little, if any; yet it was used constantly in cooking and formed part of his coffee and tea.

Fifth. The food and cooking would necessarily have a great influence on longevity. The major part of the food was supplied from the products of the farm. Care was invariably taken to have the best quality, whether animal or vegetable. The food was always well prepared and thoroughly cooked. No partially cooked food was ever placed on the table. Rare meats were unknown in the family, and so-called breakfast foods were rigidly eschewed by my mother. I do not hesitate to declare that my father's great age was largely due to my mother's cooking, and also to the constant care she never hesitated to exert over him. Fruits, both raw and prepared were freely used. As heretofore noted; apples and peaches, and other fruits, made into pie, made a favorable dish, eaten, when hot, with rich cream and plenty of sugar.

Sixth. Correct habits would necessarily have wholesome results. His meals were at regular hours, both winter and summer. He retired at 8 o'clock p.m. and arose promptly when breakfast was ready, in my time. He consumed about the same quantity at every meal, not sparingly, nor fully, and with great rapidity, retiring from the table at once.

Seventh. Evenness of temper has a soothing effect

and produces a good result. He never complained of the weather, or the failure of crops, or the price of his products. If an election was against his party, no disturbance was manifested. There were no brawls in the family, or contentions between husband and wife. I never heard my mother express her religious views. Her father was a preacher in the Christian Connexion (New Light). When church day arrived, father drove up with the carriage. I remember no instance when mother was not ready to go.

Eighth. What connection a man's religion has with longevity, I have never considered. There is a vast difference between serenity and fear. Doubtless fear has a ruinous effect over the body, and excitement is a consuming fire. It has been noted that the character of a man's God has a reflex action over his life. This may be an encroachment and sensitive question. Essentially he was a man of peace, and on all disagreements in domestic or political life he advocated a compromise. But when war came he was ever faithful to his country. Religious excitements were abhorrent to his nature, although he believed in public controversy, holding it was a proper method of disseminating and unfolding the truth.

Whatever may have been the cause or causes that contributed to the great age of James McLane, it resulted in the exceedingly rare privilege of his having seen seven generations of his family.

## Closing Scene

On March 1, 1907, father then being 93 years of age, turned over his entire business to his youngest son. While this relieved him from all his business and the care of the estate, it did not lessen his interest. There appeared to be no perceptible change, with the exception, of the failure in eyesight, until 1914, when he became physically weaker; his cough grew more violent, and two years later the lame foot gave out, and the remainder of his life he moved about on crutches. In 1914, his daughter-in-law took him completely under her care and so continued until the end. She was specially adapted to the labor. Every want was promptly supplied, and special food was prepared for every meal. She became his constant companion, and was se'dom out of his reach. All this he specially noted and toward her expressed his gratitude. There was no failure in his mind. His memory did not falter, nor his judgment weaken. It was noticeable that his body was gradually growing weaker, though he was able to leave the farm, and by the aid of crutches go about the yard. In all things he waited strictly on himself, and this continued until within four weeks of his death, although care was absolutely necessary and that at all times. In 1918, it was noticed there was a failure in the mind, which consisted in a want of discretion, by giving unpleasant facts pertaining to those with whom he was formally acquainted.

This was entirely foreign to his previous silence. On May 5, 1919 the first noticeable break took place. It was then he lost the connection between cause and effect. It was that day he went about the house handling everything he could put his hands on, and by feeling, carefully examined every object. Then he would ask, "What is it?". "What was it made for?" "Who made it?" And then would declare "No man now could make anything like that." This was kept up for four days. He would also keep saying: "Everything is so strange to me." "I do not understand it." Then a very strange desire came over him to be taken to Franklin that he might collect a just debt, long outlawed. It was then his physical strength became greater than it had been for years. He even attempted to go on foot and started off in a very determined manner. His voice grew loud and strong. He expressed himself very energetically in not being allowed to proceed, though no restraint was placed over him. From then the decline was very rapid. The last two weeks, in a feeble voice he expressed his wants. The first week, the only word was "buttermilk." This was given him, and he took but very little. He would partake of nothing else. He managed to sit in his chair, and at night he was propped up in bed. That had been continued for three years, and during all that time he never was flat in bed, by day or by night. The last week he called feebly for water, averaging about four times per hour. He partook of nothing more,—



refusing everything else. He spoke to no one, but seemed to recognize at all times his daughter-in-law. He was not wholly listless. The night before his departure, in a clear voice he said: "My end has come."

For a period of over 67 years he slept in the same room. In that room, sitting in his chair, at 7 o'clock, on Wednesday morning, September 24, 1919, James McLane entered the great beyond, aged 104 years, 11 months and 11 days.









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